

VOLUME 24

NUMBER 6/7

PRICE 15p



# Christian Order

AUG 1 1983

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## **PLEASE NOTE**

*Christian Order* is not published in July and August. The August/September number will be published in the first week of September.

My very sincere thanks to all who have renewed their subscriptions so promptly and so generously. I am more grateful than I can say. Will the very few who have not replied to their subscription-reminders please be so kind as to do so without delay? Thank you.

—*Paul Crane, S.J.*

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*Christian Order* is a magazine devoted to Catholic Social Teaching and incisive comment on current affairs in Church and State; at home and abroad; in the political, social and industrial fields. It is published ten times a year.

It is published by Father Paul Crane, S.J., from 65, Belgrave Rd., London S.W.1V, 2BG. This is the sole postal address to which all communications concerning *Christian Order* should be sent.

*Christian Order* is obtainable only by subscription and from this address. In the case of those desiring more than one copy, these are obtainable at the subscription rate and should be paid for in advance.

The annual subscription to *Christian Order* is £3 in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; \$5.00 in the United States, Canada and Australia; elsewhere according to the approximate sterling rate of exchange, in the currency of the country concerned or any convenient currency.

Air-mail rates as follows :

U.S.A., Canada

India, etc.—£6, U.S. \$15

Australia—£7, A. \$15

N. Zealand—£7, N.Z. \$15

# Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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VOLUME 24

JUNE/JULY

NO. 6/7

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## Sex on the Brain

THE EDITOR

A STORY came to my mind as I was leafing through the pages of a curriculum for Catholic Secondary Schools entitled "Education for Personal Relationships". It was first published in 1978 by a joint working party of the Westminster Religious Education Centre and the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council. My attention has been drawn to a recent reprint published earlier this year, by several distressed and good Catholic parents. That is why I was making my through it. As I was doing so, the probably apocryphal but certainly apposite story came to mind of a young American army recruit during the Second World War. In the course of his interview, a member of the board pushed a blank, white piece of paper under his nose. Then came the question, "What does this remind you of"? At once, the recruit replied, "Sex". Somewhat startled, the board member said to him, "Why?" Back, without a pause, came once more the answer of the recruit, "Everything reminds me of sex". Clearly, the recruit was unbalanced. He was, I would suggest, a psychological case.

Yet, I believe that, in this story, we have a clue to the distress felt by a good many very sane parents who have seen this booklet. Their thought is that their children will be victimized by those who are unbalanced in this matter of sex and will, in consequence, suffer great harm. I think

they are right. Those responsible for the drawing up of this curriculum are in no way malicious or evil. They are not out to do harm. They want to do nothing but good. The trouble is that they have got sex on the brain. Inevitably, in consequence, their presentation of it in syllabus form is out of context. What we get here is the over-emphasis of a subject to the point where, as it appears in the syllabus, it is presented as lying at the heart of personal relationships; isolated as a consequence of the exaggerated importance attached to it and accorded, thereby, the kind of explicit treatment, which reduces its presentation in the class-room to an exercise in the *mechanics* of sex as distinct from its *meaning*, which can only be seen in the context of the whole of God's design for man as set within the Christian way of life. Of this design, we are given no more than the rarest glimpse in this curriculum. Again, I see no malice here. Over-absorption with the technics of their subject has led those responsible for this syllabus into a situation where they cannot see the wood for the trees. They are lost; and the children they teach will be lost with them. What these unfortunates will receive will be explicit sexual instruction unrelated, as I should never be, to that beauty, which is the whole reality of the Christian way of life. The result, I would suggest, can only be disaster of a particularly tragic sort.

What Catholic children who are submitted to this curriculum will be getting is something very close to that received by their non-Catholic counterparts. Here, to put it mildly, the results have not been simply unfortunate: disastrous would be a more appropriate description in this context. What is called for now in Catholic Schools is a change of course within courses, if I may put it that way: a decisive and firm move away from what I would call the over-naturalistic—secularist, if you like—outlook that appears not only to myself, but to many, to dominate the minds of so many in Catholic education today, not only in the sexual field, but throughout the whole, where we find, in education as elsewhere, this tendency to downgrade the supernatural, which runs right through the Church at the moment. What we must have; what is so long overdue is a return to the supernatural and the predominant place it must occupy in the minds of those who teach.

For some months now we have been in receipt of complaints from Catholic parents gravely concerned with regard to the recently reprinted edition of a booklet produced by a joint working party drawn from the Westminster Religious Education Centre and the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council. It is entitled "Education for Personal Relationship" and is put out as "A Curriculum for Secondary Schools". In the article that follows, Catholic parent and father of six children who are all at school, expresses his grave concern at the present trend of what passes for sex education in Catholic schools and his alarm at the approach to this delicate subject manifested in this booklet.

## Sex in Schools : Catholic Parents at Bay

MICHAEL MacDONALD

I WONDER how many Catholic parents know that the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education* contained the following statement:

"Children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities . . . As they grow older they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex . . . Children and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgements based on a well formed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment".

### *Parental Efforts Undermined*

More to the point, how many parents know that this statement is being used by teachers and clergy to justify the introduction of an explicit—and frankly hair-raising—

sex education in our Catholic schools. I suspect the answer will be, very few indeed.

We have six children, a son who has recently finished schooling and five daughters of whom four are at secondary school and one at primary school. As Catholic parents we have always tried to instil the virtues of modesty and purity in our children, including the Church's teaching on matters covered by the Sixth Commandment. We have not given them an explicit sex education, nor do we see any need to do so, beyond a careful and factual explanation of bodily changes when we have judged it sensible to prepare them for this. But it has become evident in the last few years that some Catholic schools are going very much further in providing instruction in sexual matters, in contraception, abortion and sexual relationships, all this without any reference to parents and without expounding the moral teaching of the Pontifical Magisterium. This is not altogether surprising because many teachers in our schools are not Catholics; but it is very worrying and we have for some time felt that our efforts to bring up our children as well instructed and loyal Catholics were being seriously undermined by their Catholic schools. We also know that we are not alone in feeling like this.

### *No Guidelines*

Some eighteen months ago we found that our son, then in the Fifth Form, had received in the course of his biology lessons a set of dictated notes on the sex act, sexual diseases and contraception—in the latter case with the evidence heavily weighted in favour of artificial methods. We appealed to the headmaster. He was taken by surprise but after looking into the matter he explained that the syllabuses in some subjects, e.g. Child Development and Science, had recently been changed to include specific material on sexual matters. Since the accompanying textbooks contained this material, there were obvious difficulties in simply trying to ignore it. He had sought advice from the parish priest on his board of governors, who had told him that Archbishop's House, Southwark, had recently laid down new guidelines which were to have been issued

that term but had evidently not yet reached the school. In essence, the priest had said, they took the line that Archbishops had always laid it down that Catholic schools should not give explicit teaching on sexual matters; that times had now changed; children were now regularly confronted with allusions to sexual matters or flagrant behaviour on television, in the Press, on films and in magazines; they were also confronted with much misleading or downright false information about contraception, abortion etc.; and that in consequence these matters should in future be covered in Catholic schools within a solid framework of the Church's teaching on moral and sexual matters.

The last few words at least were reassuring. I asked Archbishop's House for a copy of the Guidelines. My request was treated courteously. But I was told that extensive enquiries had been made; no guidelines of the sort I described had been or were being prepared; the good priest who had spoken of them had evidently got it wrong.

With that assurance we were partly satisfied, though still concerned about certain aspects of this school's attitude to sex education, which had become apparent in discussion with the headmaster. But our son was in his last year there and it was clear that our decidedly old-fashioned views were going to make no impact.

About this time we were greatly encouraged by Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation on the Family. What the Holy Father said there about the importance of "education for chastity" and the "inalienable right" of parents as educators of their children seemed to us to be a clear indication that we were indeed working on the right lines.

### *A Westminster Booklet*

In February of this year, however, we received from a friend a copy of a booklet entitled *Education for Personal Relationships* — EPR for short. It was produced in 1978 (and reprinted earlier this year) by a joint working party of the Westminster Religious Education Centre and the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, comprising a priest, two teachers (a man and a woman, both married) and two nuns. It has a foreword by Bishop David Konstant com-

mending it as good and important work. I only mention this last point to indicate the status of the booklet. It claims to be a curriculum for Catholic teachers in secondary schools and beyond them for all concerned with EPR, including parents, and it opens with the quotation at the beginning of this article from the *Declaration on Christian Education*.

The curriculum includes detailed course suggestions for various age groups. Suffice to say that the sex act is to be described in detail to 11 year olds; by the age of 13 discussion of every conceivable sexual perversion is to be encouraged (they are all mentioned by name in the booklet but I see no reason why they should sully the pages of *Christian Order*); sexual fantasies are "to be expected and can help a boy prepare for an adult relationship with a woman"; there is to be "role-play", discussion cards with various sex cases outlined, the pupils having to report back their findings to the whole class. The Christian ideal of pre-marital chastity is referred to in passing under topics for 14-15 year olds: after four years of concentrated discussion on every aspect of sex that seems to be leaving it a bit late, but in a curriculum that concentrates on making children at ease with themselves as "sexual persons" it is perhaps not surprising.

### *Parent's Role?*

What about the role of parents in all this? Although they are described as "the first, closest and best educators for personal relationships", it is clear that this is no more than a ritual bow. The booklet explains that where parents give their children a good sexual education there is much that teachers can do to supplement and build upon it. Where parents fail to do so, teachers can partly compensate children for "their parents' deficiencies". Heads teachers win, tails parents lose? It goes on to point out that teachers offer their pupils an example of men and women working together and "relating to each other". Thus, when it is realised that a great deal of education for personal relations happens willy-nilly in every school, the question is not whether to offer such education, but how well. Just how that line of reasoning can be applied to a

specific sex education we must leave to the imagination of the joint working party.

So the message is clear. Courses are going to be held, regardless of whether parents agree to co-operate or not. This is confirmed further on under suggestions for organisation and planning. First, the policy is to be drafted and discussed in general terms at senior management level, then discussed at a meeting open to all members of staff. If a decision is made to proceed, a senior member of staff should be appointed as coordinator to implement the "agreed policy". He should convene a working group with representatives from "relevant departments and pastoral areas" and possibly people with expertise from outside the school. Liaison should be established with the primary schools from which pupils come to coordinate with their EPR programmes. After about three terms of planning, the working party can make its report available to the Head, staff, parents and governors. So it is only then, if at all, that parents are to be brought into the picture.

### *Stated Aims of Teachers*

The aims of EPR teachers are stated as follows: to give pupils all the facts necessary to come to an acceptance of themselves as sexual (male or female) persons (sic); to help them in a context of love and responsibility to feel at ease with themselves as sexual persons; to help them build up attitudes and standards which they can hold with a sense of personal commitment and will help them improve their ability to make choices; underlying all this will be a sense of wonder at creation and thanksgiving for the gift of sexuality.

But should not the first aim be to give pupils a clear and thorough understanding of the Church's moral teaching, which could equally be given in a context of love and responsibility? Nowhere in this curriculum is there a mention of Catholic doctrine, of the sixth Commandment, of sin; merely of imprecise Christian belief, as if all Christians of whatever denomination were at one in their acceptance of the Church's moral teaching.

Indeed, this curriculum goes further. Teachers are advised to avoid appealing to authority or to moral codes

or ethical rules *until* (its emphasis) there has been adequate case discussion, on the grounds that premature appeals to authority tend to foreclose thought, provoke hostility, lead to hypocrisy or produce apathy. When a situation has been adequately considered in context is the time to add, "Christians traditionally believe so and so. Can you accept that?" or "The Church teaches such and such", or "You've just worked out what the Christian community has learned to believe over the past two thousand years".

### *Fraught with Danger*

This advice is carried further in the next section, on Authority. It explains that the Church responds to human sexuality with a few authoritative statements and with day to day teaching (which by implication is not authoritative. It is not hard to guess under which heading *Humanae Vitae* would fall. Teachers, "like theologians, seek to understand and explain this response". (So pupils are at the mercy of the individual teacher's interpretation of the Church's moral teaching.) There is even a special word of warning to teachers who feel that in allowing their pupils "space to work out values", they may be compromising their own deeply-held beliefs. The belief that must not be compromised here, they are sternly told, is the belief in the right of the individual to develop his conscience, to discover moral attitudes and values that he can make his own, that reflect his own deep convictions about what is right and wrong.

For sheer fatuity the prize must go to the following statement about the use of suitable written work for eleven olds: "It seems important that such work should not be subject to marks or penalties: it would be sad to be a failure at sex at the age of eleven". But the curriculum is not just fatuous. Even if our Catholic schools were models of all that is best in Catholic education, the approach recommended would be fraught with danger. As it is, with many teachers not being Catholics and some others, alas, not necessarily subscribing to every aspect of the Church's moral teaching, it becomes nothing less than a direct assault on our children's minds and souls. And bear

in mind that this curriculum has already been in use for five years.

The general philosophy expounded in the Westminster booklet seems to be spreading through our schools. A Working Party on Sex Education set up by St. Andrew's Academy, Saltcoats, Liaison Committee (Primary and Secondary Schools) has produced a Document for Sex Education for Catholic Schools. I understand it is still being considered, but from the comments of a parent who has seen it I have the impression that it may be worse than the Westminster document. There may be others.

### *Urgent Task for Parents*

We parents seem to be slow in finding out just what is going on. Perhaps as a starter we should all be asking our area bishops and local Catholic schools what guidelines are in practice and what arrangements exist or are being planned for the teaching of sex education and chastity education. I very much hope that some such organisation as Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice or Parents' Concern or Pro Fide could draw together a dossier of such curricula and their shortcomings which could be made available to parents.

In cases where there is a curriculum of the sort described above, the bishop and the school can fairly be asked to explain how it can be reconciled with the Holy Father's teaching in his Apostolic Exhortation on the Family that: — those in society who are in charge of schools must never forget that the parents have been appointed by God Himself as the first and principal educators of their children and that their right is completely inalienable.—Education for chastity is absolutely essential . . . Christian parents . . . will devote special attention and care to education in virginity or celibacy. —Sex education . . . which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in education centres chosen and controlled by them.

Let us insist on our completely inalienable right.

# The Ministry of Women in Life

5 : CORPUS CHRISTI

PENELOPE TURING

Come, dear Heart !

The fields are white to harvest : come and see  
As in a glass the timeless mystery  
Of love, whereby we feed  
On God, our bread indeed.

Torn by the sickles, see him share the smart  
Of travelling Creation : maimed despised;  
Yet by his lovers the more dearly prized  
Because for us he lays his beauty down—  
Last toll paid by perfection for our loss !  
Trace on these fields his everlasting Cross,  
And o'er the stricken sheaves the Immortal Victim's  
crown.

From far horizons came a Voice that said,  
'Lo ! from the hand of Death take thou thy daily bread'.

Then I, awakening, saw  
A splendour burning in the heart of things;  
The flame of living love which lights the law  
Of mystic death that works the mystic birth.  
I knew the patient passion of the earth,  
Maternal, everlasting, whence there springs  
The Bread of Angels and the life of man.

Now in each blade

I, blind no longer, see  
The glory of God's growth : know it to be  
An earnest of the Immemorial Plan.

Yea, I have understood

How all things are one great oblation made :  
He on our altars, we on the world's rood,  
Even as this corn,  
Earth-born,  
We are snatched from the sod;  
Reaped, ground to grist,  
Crushed and tormented in the Mills of God,  
And offered at Life's hands, a living Eucharist.

That again was Evelyn Underhill, and Canon W. C. E. Newbolt speaking to a group of priests more than eighty years ago saw the same vision when he said "to feel that this whole world around us is a great sacrament whose inner presence is God".

Christ came to minister to his whole Creation, and in him and through him and by him is our ministry, to him and to his world.

There is no limitation to this kind of service, no hours of work, no retirement age. It is a great and glorious vocation, but one which succeeds only by the will of God, not our independent desires. When we try to force through our own convictions of what is right for our lives or those of others—however honest and sincere may be our belief in it—we shall probably meet with frustration and disappointment. We must take it all to God, offer our ideas, our talents, our staying power, and above all our submission to his will. Even then we shall not always read his answers aright. Obedience is a particularly hard lesson for us today, for there is little enough training for it in the secular world. But we must be prepared to obey God's will implicitly or we shall not receive the strength and insight to serve him, and to accept the fact that often our best laid schemes, our cherished offerings will be broken in the process.

The minuscule offering of the loaves and fishes was taken, blessed, broken, before it nourished a multitude. Often our service is transformed in the same way. The neat little package which we are prepared to give to God ends up in fragments, but if we give him our whole selves to use in his own way — then the broken pieces of our first endeavour may be used far, far beyond our dreaming. This kind of service is very costly to the ego, but in the end it is the only one which is worthwhile.

Faith, obedience, love are the keys to the only worthwhile ministry we can offer. They are needed now as always. Neither God nor the human heart changes, though the world be computerised. For without faith we are not conscious of God, without obedience we cannot carry out his will, and without love we cannot know him.

There are some people who seem to have no power to love, even in the most earthly and selfish way. There are

very few of them, I think, but they are pitiable creatures, hard and entrenched and self-sufficient until they fail themselves. And they are the hardest of all to bring to any conception of the love of God. But they are a part of our ministry too.

Most of us learn to love God very gradually, as his love for us permeates our feeble understanding. Some people can point to a moment of conversion in their lives, a sharp transition from disbelief to faith. For some of the rest of us it is different, and the landmark in our lives is the time when we become aware that we love God more than any human being, more than ourselves, more than anything else in life. That is a great and strange discovery. It's a bit frightening, but it is the time when the peace of God enters into us. It also transforms all other loving. It is a fact, not always easy to accept, that the nearer we come to God the less we can be wholly wrapped up in another person, a human person. Then our love for them must be transformed. Either it remains selfish, possessive, or lustful in which case it is antagonistic to the love of God, jealous and full of doubt. Or else we bring our human loves to the fulness of Christ's love. Our love for them is one with our love of God, they and we ourselves are icons of the Holy Spirit. And that is the best gift we can give to them and the most perfect sacrifice of love which we in our imperfection can offer to our Lord.

And so there is our ministry of love, to those dear to us, to those we do not even like, to the passerby in the street, our fellow workers, our family. We know all about that. It is preached often enough. It is practised—sometimes. We must be realistic with ourselves. The lonely and uninvolved are often unlovable. That has nothing to do with the matter. We are to love them and serve them just the same. There is nothing in the parable of the Good Samaritan to suggest that the man who fell among thieves was in any way a pleasing character or one to inspire sympathy. There is nothing about him, either way. The fact that the Levite stopped and had a look at him before going on suggests that there was nothing to commend him to respectable people. .

Our ministry is love and service and comfort. I like to think it is also to leaven the often heavy lump of life with a sense of humour. It is also the witness of our own lives, and we must not be afraid of this through knowing our own shortcomings. The readiness is all. God can make something of us. And let us remember too, our task to lead the young.

We are women, let us help girls raised in this harsh, belligerent, unisex world to know more of themselves, and of a woman's power and privilege and responsibility.

Our Lord and the early church taught by gathering together little groups, teaching them and sending them out. Today the Lord still works in his servants who are his living Church : one to one, or two or three. Let us go out to serve and to teach others how to love and serve him.

I shall leave you with the last message of Evelyn Underhill, written a few weeks before she died, to a Prayer Group which she led.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT : DOWER AND POWER

"From the very beginning the Church has been sure that the series of events which were worked out to their inevitable end in Holy Week sum up and express the deepest secrets of the relation of God to men. That means, of course, that Christianity can never be merely a pleasant or consoling religion. It is a stern business. It is concerned with the salvation through sacrifice and love of a world in which, as we can all see now, evil and cruelty are rampant. Its supreme symbol is the Crucifix—the total and loving self-giving of man to the redeeming purposes of God.

"Because we are all the children of God we all have our part to play in His redemptive plan; and the Church consists of those loving souls who have accepted this obligation, with all its costs. Its members are all required to live, each in their own way, through the sufferings and self-abandonment of the Cross; as the only real contribution which they can make to the redemption of the world. Christians, like their Master, must be ready to accept the worst that evil and cruelty can do to them, and vanquish it by the power of love.

"For if sacrifice, total self-giving to God's mysterious purpose, is what is asked of us, His answer to that sacrifice is the gift of power. Easter and Whitsuntide complete the Christian Mystery by showing us first our Lord Himself and then His chosen apostles possessed of a new power—the power of the Spirit—which changed every situation in which they were placed. That supernatural power is still the inheritance of every Christian, and our idea of Christianity is distorted and incomplete unless we rely on it. It is this power and only this which can bring in the new Christian society of which we hear so much. We ought to pray for it; expect it; trust it; and as we do this, we shall gradually become more and more sure of it".

Dear Father, take us your children and your servants and use us as you will. Fill our hearts with your love, our minds with your strength and wisdom, and help us to reflect your joy and peace, now and always. Through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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### **"RENEWAL" AMONG THE NUNS**

Once they had a crucifix,  
Hanging on a cord,  
And everywhere they went, they took  
Their suffering Lord.

They took Him to the hospital,  
The schoolroom and the street,  
And bending down to talk  
To any child they chanced to meet,  
One would sometimes pick Him up,  
And kiss His wounded feet.

And now they have discarded it:  
Why? You will never guess?  
"It is no longer 'suitable',  
For nuns in 'modern' dress".

R. S.

During past years, discussion of the Church's role—if any—in the political field has been stimulated by events in South and, particularly, Central America. In what follows, Father Crane tries to clarify that role. In order to do so effectively, he makes a distinction he considers to be vital — between the Church's involvement in party politics as distinct from a political situation.

#### CURRENT COMMENT

# Church and Politics

THE EDITOR

I TAKE for granted at the outset of this article the existence of God and his creation of man. An understanding of the basic implications of the latter is, I believe, essential if the relationship between the Church and the political order is to be viewed in its true context. As a help to this understanding it is necessary to look for a moment at the meaning of creation itself.

#### *The Meaning of Creation*

Creation, within the context of this article, means to make out or nothing. The reader will forgive me if I point out that this does not mean that God took something called nothing out of which he made man. This would be a nonsense. What making out of nothing does mean is that, in the case of the direct creation of man's soul, which gives man his essence as a human being, there is no pre-existing something out of which God made it. He made it out of no thing (nothing). There is no thing (nothing) from the side of man that contributes to the creation of his soul, which makes him a human being. There is nothing of himself in his human essence. This makes man *totally and absolutely dependent on God*. The story is very different when you consider human making. The carpenter who makes, say, a table is dependent certainly

on his own skill, but also on his tools and the wood out of which he makes the table. Without these there would be no table. There is, therefore, not only something of himself in the table, when finished; there is something of tools and wood as well. The completed table is not wholly due to him as the essence of the completed human being is wholly due to God. The relationship of table to carpenter is one of interdependence, for its making is not wholly due to him, but also to the pre-existing constituents (some things) without which the carpenter would be helpless and there would be no table. By contrast, the relationship of the created human soul to God is one of total dependence, for it is from no pre-existing constituents; but from God alone. It is from this no-thing-ness from ourselves that goes to our making that the totality of our dependence on God arises. Out of this dependence there can only come, in its turn, the obligation to serve God. The obligation remains whether we like it or not. It is the creature not of whim, but of the totality of our dependence on God, which is of our human essence.

### *Man's Service of God*

The next question, of course, is how; how do we serve God? The answer can only be in terms of obedience to God's wishes in our regard and that, once again, by reason of every human being's total and absolute dependence on God as his Creator. There can be no valid option here, though many that are invalid have been and still are being tried. These have led always and always will lead to disaster. Only one course is open to a created human being. It comes out of and is dictated by his total dependence on God. That course is the fulfilment by man of God's law in his regard. And by God's law I mean the instructions given by God to men to enable them to make their way through life to Him and to be with Him at the end, when life is done. The instructions must be there, for it would be contrary to the goodness of God—and so to his existence—were He to set man down here on this earth, enjoining them to come to Him, and, at the same time, deny them the means of so coming; giving them no sign-posts along the way, leaving them stranded. Man's

primary task, then, in virtue of his obligation to serve God, which comes out of his total dependence on Him, is the fulfilment of God's law in man's regard. The obligation is laid on every man irrespective of race, colour or creed.

The Catholic Church, founded by Christ, who was God, is the custodian of God's law — written as to its basic principles in men's hearts; revealed to Moses in the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai; contained within the final revelation brought by Christ to men, which is known as the Deposit of Faith and which closed with the death of the last Apostle; consigned as such to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and placed within her keeping forever. The task of that Church is the salvation of men through the process of evangelization, which means bringing to them the truth brought by Christ and given to herself, along with the ordinary and normal means of Grace — prayer and the Sacraments — consigned to her keeping by Christ and which she alone has in their fullness. These means are essential to those who would live by God's truth, through the keeping of his law, thereby attaining their salvation and assisting in that of their fellow-men.

### *Man's Human Powers and His Service of God*

The above, you might say, is the outline. I apologise for what may well seem to some its over-simplification. I wanted to clear the ground. Having done so, the next step is simple. I have just written of men holding to the truth, living by God's law and so on. They do this as human beings possessed of understanding and will. Their way of holding to God's law, therefore, is through the exercise of their human powers. Where they are concerned there is no other way. Their co-operation with God in the work of their own salvation and that of others can only be through the exercise of their human powers. It follows that the Church which is concerned with their salvation must be concerned with this co-operation, must be concerned, therefore, with the conditions, which affect the exercise by a man of his human powers and so his ability, as a human (choosing) being to co-operate with God in the work of his salvation.

## *The Church's Concern with Man's Human Powers*

Let me put it this way. Man, as a human being meant to co-operate with God through the Church in the work of his salvation, can only do this through the exercise of his human powers of understanding and will. It follows that he has a moral (human) right—a claim set within his human nature by God, simply because he is a man—to the minimum conditions necessary to enable him to exercise his human powers in this fashion. The Catholic Church, whose concern is with man's salvation, must be concerned with this right; must, therefore, be concerned with the conditions which facilitate its expression and employment as indeed, with those which constrict or, even, negate both. Again, the same might be put in these terms by saying that every man in any society, irrespective of colour, creed or race—simply because he is a man—has the right to live at a level compatible with his dignity as a human being. And, since this dignity is found in his *likeness* to God, which is through his possession of a non-material soul, with its powers of understanding and will, man's dignity *is* given its due to the extent that the social, economic and, indeed, political conditions within which his life is set are such as to allow that due (ease of) exercise of his human powers, which is essential to his co-operation with God in the work of his own salvation and that of his fellow-men.

## *Church's Concern with Conditions Affecting Human Powers*

It needs to be emphasized that the Catholic Church is concerned with these conditions *not* for their own sake, *not* as an end in itself — this is the horizontalist and humanist heresy—*not* as a substitute for Christianity, as is the case with the W.C.C., but simply and solely as supportive or not-supportive of that *due* exercise by man of his human powers, which is essential to his co-operation with God in the work of his salvation. Effort directed by the Church into the social, political and economic fields must never be seen as an end in itself, a *substitute*—as it is by too many Catholics today — for her primary task, which is the salvation of men. It needs to be seen rightly as *integral* to that task, ancillary, but none the less essen-

tial to its effective prosecution; as I believe any man of goodwill with no political, economic or social axe to grind, will realise. The Catholic Church, then, *must be concerned* with the political, social and economic circumstances that surround the lives of all men, wherever they may be. She has no option but to be concerned, if she is to be true to her evangelizing mission. The extent to which she *expresses* that concern—the form it takes in the concrete in particular cases — can only be determined finally, I would suggest, by her representatives on the spot in the light of particular circumstances and against the background provided by contemporary Catholic Social Teaching.

### *Clerics and Party Politics*

But one thing — I would suggest further — is certain where the political circumstances that impinge on a man's life are concerned. It is that the Church's clergy and religious—obviously, not the laity—from bishops and top religious superiors down cannot lend themselves to *party politics* in an endeavour to resolve political circumstances, when adverse, in the interests of human dignity. They cannot give themselves and, through themselves, the Church to the support of a particular party programme. The reason is clear. So to do — on the assumption we make in this context, that the particular party programme in question is legitimate, as are those of other particular parties—would be to tie the fortunes of the Church in that country to a particular line of approach, which Catholics *could* support, but which they are in no way *obliged* to support, for the simple reason that there are other party programmes equally acceptable to them. In consequence, the Church in the country concerned is robbed of her rightful and essential independence; taken into the maelstrom of a largely secularized struggle, thereby clouding the transcendental nature of her divine mission and coarsening the expression of her message, which is that of God to men. Finally, Catholics who for perfectly good reasons are members of other legitimate political parties are alienated from her.

## *Party Politics and Political Situations*

I doubt whether there would be much dispute over the type of issue outlined above, where Catholics are concerned. It is outlined here merely to clear the ground. The question that has come to the fore these days is other than this, which is not in serious dispute. It is concerned not so much with party politics, but with *political situations*, including those which are of a politico/economic nature; with what might be called the kind of stance the Church should adopt in face of the oppression of a people exercised in the name of an establishment, political or otherwise, making use of political, social and economic means to secure and maintain a situation, which is advantageous to itself, but oppressive of human dignity, where the mass of a country's population is concerned.

## *The Church and Political Oppression*

For reasons already given, it should be clear that the Church must be concerned with this kind of situation and—at the very least, mentally—opposed to it. What is also clear, but very often unrecognised as such, is that the basis of the Church's opposition is essentially moral and not political. She is opposed to a government's exercise of political power to the point where the individual citizen's moral (human) right to live at a level consonant with his dignity as a human being is constricted in its expression to the point of extreme difficulty or, indeed, virtual negation. If and when she moves against this situation, she is accused, as often as not, of "interfering with politics", going beyond her brief, which is concerned with "the salvation of souls". Those who have had the patience to bear with me so far will recognise that the accusation is as false as it is shallow. The Church, in this case, is *not* interfering with politics. She is resisting the efforts of political and/or economic oppressors, who *are* interfering within the field of social morality over which she has guardianship because integral, though ancillary, to the evangelizing process over which she has dominion. Let those Catholics in particular—clerical and lay—who are so quick to accuse her of "playing politics" in this kind of situation, which finds them so often within an oppres-

sive establishment that works to their material and social advantage, take careful note of this distinction and act accordingly. The fact that a *moral* stance may of necessity have to be expressed in political overtones — as, for example, in Poland and the Philippines today—does *not* remove from that stance its essentially moral nature. This is the lesson that Catholics—particularly those who are benefitting politically and economically from an oppressive situation — have to learn and learn well today. I would suggest, indeed, that it is, to no small an extent, the inertia in face of oppression of Catholic clerico-lay establishments in many third-world countries that has allowed the oppression itself to be built into the structures of those countries as part of their way of life. Latin America, I would suggest, is a case in point. So, too, is the Philippines, whose Hierarchy, at the moment of writing, has just issued a Pastoral Letter, indicting the oppressive Marcos Government. This is, in essence, not a political act. It is a *moral* condemnation of political and economic oppression which affects adversely the *moral* life of a people. Other countries could be included, in the West as well as in the Third World, where the same build-up of oppression as a way of life within the structure of their social systems has been allowed to proceed virtually unchecked. Now that the crunch has come or is in process of coming to most of them, the Church in the countries concerned is confronted with a task made infinitely more difficult by reason of the inertia of the past.

### *The National Security State*

The situation described above covers that exemplified by the type of National Security State found in South America and elsewhere. It tallies closely with the trend, not all that far removed from the Latin American situation, that appears to be increasingly apparent in many African countries today. In these and other like countries a confrontation point, carrying with it a crunch similar to that already described between Church and State, is discernible to a greater or lesser degree. Where the crunch has already come, as in Latin America, the Philippines and elsewhere, I would suggest that the Church has

a threefold course of action open to her. I would outline it as follows.

### *The First Thing to Do*

In the first place, Church Authority should give its unflinching support to priests and laymen who are sharing their lives with the poor and oppressed, standing with them against their oppressors in the overcrowded slums of the cities and the—so often—poverty-stricken countryside. At the same time, those who so stand, particularly priests and religious should be brought to a basic knowledge of *why* they so stand and *what* they are seeking as the goal of their standing. They can only stand because urged so to do by the compassion of Christ and *in no way* by the categories of Marx; with their goal Christ's kingdom which is ultimately not of this earth, but transcendental; attaining its consummation for each one of us in that union with God which is ours in Heaven.

### *The Second Thing to Do*

In the second place, every effort must be made in every institute—clerical, religious and lay—to make known in terms—decisive, clear and authoritative—the basic theology—dogmatic and moral—that Catholics must know as a guide to their own living and that of the society of which they form a part. It is to my mind scandalous that, at a time when a knowledge of both is so urgent a need, so little effort should still be made to make either known in a way that is both intimate and effective. As a result of this neglect—to which the present confusion within the Church has so largely contributed—what happened in the past is happening now all over again: Catholic members of oppressive establishments in the West and in the Third World shelter within an unjust *status quo* inherited from the past and regarded by themselves as “God-given”. Meanwhile, the poor drift into the Marxist ranks; and who is to blame them for that, when they find themselves and their plight unheeded by their Church that should come to their aid, not by way of opportunism or out of fear of a Marxist take-over; but simply and solely because the extension of such aid in the face of the oppression

that besets them is part-and-parcel of the process of evangelization to which the Church, by reason of her God-given mission, is committed. Clearly, then, a vast effort in the field of basic theology—moral and dogmatic—is of most urgent necessity everywhere throughout the Church and, very specially, in the countries concerned. It is vital that the religious orders should give themselves wholeheartedly to this task. There is little point in their being with the poor and the oppressed unless they teach the poor and the press, not only by word, but by example.

### *The Third Thing to Do*

Which brings me to the third point; which is that true teaching must be given expression in practice and in the life-style of those who teach. Which means that the priests who work with those who are oppressed must live with and share their lives with them. As a simple and as difficult as that, even when allowance is made, as it must be, for differing circumstances of climate, place and way-of-life. It means also that teaching *must issue* in practice; particularly, perhaps, in co-operative and sharing arrangements, in town and countryside; in the build-up of every kind of intermediate and voluntary association, social and, indeed, religious, that brings people together and opens them to the Good News of the Gospel, set forth within the tradition of the Church, in all its manifestations. The line of action I am indicating here is in accordance with a dictum that has been brought to me through tough and hard experience of the Third World over a period of twenty years. It is that "In a politically impossible situation, the best political action is that which is non-political". Shortage of space compels me to do no more than consign to the reflection of the reader the implications of this remark. The same goes too, for the little mention of Marxism and Marxist States that I have made in this article. I have done so in the hope that it is sufficiently clear to all who read this article that the Marxist State is intrinsically evil because of the evil assumption that underlines its whole structure; viz., that the individual citizen has no value in himself, but only as a part of the collective. From which it follows that he exists to serve the

State and not vice versa. From which it follows that the Marxist State is of its very nature oppressive and, indeed, destructive of human dignity and must be resisted.

### *Pre-emptive Action*

To those other countries in the Third World, particularly, which appear as moving in the direction of the crunch that has come to many in Latin America, I would recommend the same line of action as that outlined above. It should be noted, however, that the action to be taken in their case by the Church can be classed as pre-emptive and, therefore, easier, perhaps, to inaugurate than in those countries where the crunch has already come. At the same time — precisely because the crunch *is* coming — urgently necessary and demanding instant and concentrated attention issuing in effective action on the part of those who see what is coming and know the steps necessary in the social field to counter it. Is this too demanding? I can only say that, if it proves to be so, the Church will fail and there can be no guarantee that she will be rescued from her failure as—I believe myself—she has been rescued in Latin America.

### *Multi-national Monopolies and Political Oppression*

Shortage of space and the desire, above all, to clarify as, in essence, non-political, the *essentially* moral stance of the Church when involved in political situations not of her making—and because she is opposed to oppression—compel me to be content with the observation that what might be classed quite soberly as multi-national, monopoly capitalism is found, as often as not, to be part-and-parcel of the oppressive type of political establishment described above; as often as not, working through such establishments, maintaining them in power for purposes of monopoly profit, treating them, in part, for what they are; the puppets of multi-national monopoly and nothing more. The same would apply to the wealthy plantocracies, which dominate governments—make and break them—in not a few tropical, third-world countries.

Under such circumstances, the action of the Church need be in essence little different from that described above.

This Joint Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of the Philippines accords, as it seems to us, with the directives given by the Holy Father in his letters to the Bishops of Nicaragua and El Salvador, which are published in this issue of *Christian Order*, also with the principles set down by the Editor in his treatment of the Church and Politics in this month's "Current Comment".

# Dialogue for Peace

JOINT PASTORAL LETTER  
CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF THE PHILIPPINES

PEACE be with you.

Our greeting is a blessing, a prayer, a hope that the Peace of Christ may indeed become a reality for all of us. For today in the Philippines we live in deep conflicts, in an all too glaring absence of peace. We greet you also in these words as our solemn affirmation of the need to dialogue for peace.

We, pastors and flock, have the sacred trust from Christ to preach His peace, to strive to effect his peace, in the concrete world of our day-to-day life. But what does the Peace of Christ mean for the conflicting issues that today threaten to ruin us as a people? What should we be doing as bearers and doers of the Gospel of Christ, as effective agents of His Peace?

## OUR MISSION

Our basic mission as Church is to proclaim in word and deed the good news of salvation in Christ, in season and out of season. And it is most fitting that we remind ourselves of the fact in this Jubilee Year, the 1950th anniversary of Our Lord's redeeming death and resurrection. In the fulfilment of our mission, we need no reminder of the truth that Christ, as Vatican II puts it, "gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic or

social order" (GS no. 42) and hence it cannot and should not be "identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system" but it is "the sign and the safeguard of the transcendental dimension of the human persons" (GS no. 70).

The purpose Christ has set before His Church is a religious one. But "out of this religious mission itself come a function, a light, and an energy which can serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law" (GS no. 42).

It is this structuring, this consolidating of our society according to the divine law that is our concern here. For it is precisely this aspect of our mission that is at the root of our current problems with Government.

## OUR PRESENT SITUATION

At our annual conference in Baguio last month, we, your Pastors, took a hard look at our difficulties with Government, at the reasons behind them. It is not our intent to detail them all here. But in our reflecting together, we came to the clear conclusion that we should speak our minds out on our present problems, firstly, on the arrest and detention of priests, religious and Church workers in our social action programs, and secondly, on the deeper issues that undergird the action of the Military against the Church.

### *Arrests and Detentions*

Over the past half year, a number of priests, sisters and lay workers have been arrested or put on an arrest list on charges of rebellion and subversion. We make no judgment whether these Church people are indeed guilty or innocent of the charges against them. But this much we can say:

a) We have in the recent past rejected violence as an effective human and Christian solution to the problem of communities and nations. We still do. Criminal acts can in no way be justified as the way to liberation. If these priests, religious and lay workers are guilty of these and similar criminal acts of which they are accused, let them suffer the consequences of their acts. We do not exempt them from the ordinary demands of law merely because they work for the Church.

b) Individual and groups of Bishops have repeatedly called the attention of the proper civil and military authorities to instances of arrest and detention with disregard for due process. We ask therefore, that, in the case of arrest and detention of these Church's personnel, as in any other, strict adherence to due process be fully observed. Let them be charged and tried in open court, not declared guilty, treated as guilty, on mere suspicion.

c) We also ask that all their rights, human and civil, be respected at all times; that they should not be tortured or maltreated while under detention.

d) And finally, we ask for an immediate review of the present legal definition of subversion, and more importantly, once a reasonable understanding is arrived at, that a consistent and strict implementation be followed.

### *The Deeper Issues*

Important as it may be, this issue of arrest and detention is merely one of the many symptoms of deeper issues that touch closely both Government and Church. These are the issues of poverty and development, and the issue of dissent from unjust laws and from the policies and practices of Government.

a) Poverty. Poverty is the economic condition of life in which the vast majority of our people live. Notwithstanding attempts at alleviation, it continues to grow more deeply. The structures built into the social system are at the root of this recalcitrance to change for the better.

The Government has initiated a massive program of economic development aimed at correcting problems of poverty. But a number of its key developmental priorities, like heavy reliance on multinationals and its favoring of their needs over those of the people; its attention to tourist facilities and services, like lavish film festivals, over the services it can and should provide for rural areas, do not appear to lessen the number of our poor which is growing daily; their destitution more acute.

Economic corruption, both in the area of public administration and in the area of private business, is a major, though not the only, cause of the growing poverty of our people, because such corruption not only deprives the poor

of benefits due them, but also heightens their already much battered sense of justice.

b) Dissent. Legitimate dissent is all too easily construed by the Government we have as rebellion and treason, as subversion in its conveniently amorphous definition. Yet, there are many aspects of the current political system that invite the dissent of the ordinary citizen. For one, the injustices and the corruption we noted above in the developmental policies and programs of the Government; for another, the increasing militarization of the country, either for national security purposes or for enforcing socio-economic projects which sometimes are questionable and doubtful as to their wisdom.

Insurgency — counter-militarization — is the response of segments of Philippine society that despair of any possibility of righting such wrongs as we have described. Other groups feel that they cannot obtain the reins of power for themselves save through violence.

### REFLECTIONS

Are the issues we speak of above purely of a political nature so that we can say, as the Government claims, that they are beyond the scope of the Church's concerns? Or do they fall under our stated task of structuring and consolidating our society according to the divine law?

The fact is that these issues are not merely and narrowly political problems. They do fall under the *religious* mission of the Church for the simple reason that there is a way of working for development, there is a way of dissenting from unjust laws, a way that is either in accordance with or, on the contrary, in contravention of the law of the Gospel. It is a Gospel which includes working for justice as a "constitutive element" of our preaching (Cf. Bishops' Synod of 1971).

We are only too aware that the specifics of action for development and justice according to the Gospel will always be a problem in any Church community and, hence, a matter of continual and constant faith-discernment. But whatever those specifics are, they have to be worked out within the general parameters set by the Gospel of truth and charity; of respect for human dignity and rights; of

sharing and concern for the common good (Cf. GS 26, 27, 29, 41); of freedom and responsibility.

Hence, we will have to reprobate any action or program that runs counter to the primary values of the Gospel : the torture and murder of citizens simply because they are of a different political persuasion from that of present or would-be powerholders; the silencing of people, the suppression of the media, merely because they speak the truth of our national situation; the increasing use of arms and violence; both by forces on the right and on the left, in the pursuit of their ends of power; and closer to home, the use of Church funds, the manipulation of Church programs, for the political purposes of ideological groups.

## OUR RESPONSE

In the light of the saving mission of the Church, it becomes necessary to address ourselves to all who are concerned with the problems that threaten the very foundations of the peace and security which Christ desires we all share and enjoy. (We are coming out with pastoral guidelines and instructions for our priests, religious and lay workers on the matter.)

1. We call on *our people, men and women of faith*: You are engaged in the task of perfecting the society in which we live (EN, 73). No society can long stand and succeed without the earnest cooperation of all its members. By the Gospel you have received, you are mandated to obey the laws of the land in so far as these are truly just and conducive to the attainment of peace in the community. In your living of Christ's Gospel, you correct and transform the secular order. Hence, you must be ever vigilant in safeguarding your God-given rights, not allowing anyone to trample upon them (AWG, 2). For these rights spring from your dignity as human beings and as children of the Father, and they must be the basis of our peace, of our action for peace.

2. We call on *our priests and religious*: We are able to be exemplars of Christian leadership, charity and service, drawing strength and direction from the life, word and service of the Lord, as we give expression to our own social apostolate.

In our service to our people, in the social apostolate, especially, we must take into careful consideration the social teachings of the Church. If there is anything clear in their thrust, it is that every pastoral effort must lead people to Christ; every pastoral action must be truly ecclesial, stemming from faith, building up the community of believers.

We take a clear "preferential option" for the poor, supporting them in their assertion of their common dignity, in their defence of their rights, especially when these are violated by the powerful. But let our action be always in line with the spirit of the Gospel; let it lead to love, not hatred; to forgiveness, not violence.

To this end, we must not allow ourselves to be used, in our action for justice, by political ideologies of any color that, in theory and practice, deny the Transcendent any place in human living, and subordinate human freedom and dignity to their all-consuming drive for power.

And finally, let us seriously take to heart what Pope John Paul II said at Puebla, Mexico, in 1979 and repeated to us in Manila in 1981 : "You are priests and religious; you are not social or political leaders or officials of temporal power . . . Let us not be under the illusion that we are serving the Gospel if we dilute our charism through an exaggerated interest in the wide field of temporal problems".

3. We call on our government officials and the military: You are the avowed guardians of peace and order, the enforcers of law and justice. In the interest of the people, whom we must all serve, it is of the utmost importance that you seek out, in all possible objectivity, the root causes of the social disturbances of our time and apply genuine remedies to them, not mere promises and palliatives of empty propaganda.

In so complex a society as ours, dissent, when legitimate, should be treated as a healthy indicator of the people's commitment to the grand task of nation-building and, therefore, should not be readily interpreted as subversion on the part of those who act according to their constitutional freedom. In the spirit of brotherhood, we ask you to accept a certain pluralism of positions in the way our

people strive for justice according to their faith. If real public opinion is to be formed only in a free market of ideas, the process cannot take place adequately without the Government's respect, in its restrained use of power and authority, for freedom of speech and the means of communication.

In the interest of peace and justice, of true prosperity, let us work together for full human development, which in the words of Pope Paul VI, "in order to be authentic, must be complete and integral" and must "promote the good of every man and of the whole man" (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 14).

4. Finally, we wish to address a reminder to ourselves, *Bishops of the Church*: We reiterate our constant need for conversion, re-echoing the maternal concern of Our Lady of Fatima for us all, her children—lay people, religious, priests and bishops. We renew our commitment to put ourselves more intensely at the service of our people and we do so in the strong faith that out of the darkness of conflict, we will, with God's help, generate the light that will guide us in our tasks for peace. Through word and example, may we lead our people along the path of peace to the Lord of Peace.

In the tender compassion of our God  
The dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
(Lk. 1, 78-79)

To all of you, we impart our pastoral blessing.  
For the Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of the Philippines:

✠ ANTONIO Ll. MABUTAS, D.D.  
Archbishop of Davao  
President

February 20, 1983  
First Sunday of Lent  
Manila

In the Summer of last year, 1982, the Holy Father wrote two letters, one to the Bishops of Nicaragua, the other to those of El Salvador, in which he stated clearly the directives the Church in those countries was to follow: directives he was to reiterate and re-emphasize in the journey he made to Central America in February of this year. They are reproduced here as lending substance and strength to the Editor's article on "Church and Politics" and Father Schall's study of Central America and Politicized Religion", which are published in this issue of *Christian Order*.

## Two Letters of Pope John Paul

### 1 : TO THE BISHOPS OF NICARAGUA

WHILE in obedience to the mysterious call that made him Peter's successor, he willingly spends what he has and even spends himself for the good of all (cf. II Cor 12: 15), the Pope does not forget his special obligations towards those who in the particular Churches of the whole world, carry out their ministry as Pastors in the midst of many difficulties.

A special bond unites them. Special because of its roots in the gospel, since to Peter, on whom he had conferred the first place among the Twelve, Jesus wished to confide, at a solemn moment of his life, the mission of confirming his brethren in the faith and in the apostolic service (cf. Lk 22:32). Special also because of its theological nature: the Second Vatican Council deepened the ancient doctrine of episcopal collegiality and emphasized with a richness of concepts and expressions that the episcopal College "in so far as it is composed of many members, is the expression

of the multifariousness and universality of the People of God; and of the unity of the Body of Christ, in so far as it is assembled under one head" (*Lumen Gentium*, 22; cf. *Christus Dominus*, 4).

By reason of this bond, which nonetheless is deeply affective because of its dogmatic aspect, and given the peculiar circumstances in which you are called to carry out your episcopal ministry. I want you to know that I am very close to you. Close, I say, in so far as "I do not cease to thank God for you and to remember you in my prayers" (Eph 1:16). Close, too, because of the care and interest with which I keep myself informed about your pastoral activities. Close, also, through my spiritual support of your work, a work that is as devoted as it is demanding and delicate, in favour of the human, personal and collective promotion of peoples. Close, finally, because of my fraternal solicitude concerning your duty as Pastors and Teachers in the Churches confided to you.

### *Communion among ourselves*

Besides, since today's feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul renews in us the sense of collegiality, it provides me with an opportunity of writing to you, "for I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you" (Rom 1:10).

I want to find in these preceding considerations the first and fundamental expression of the support and encouragement I desire to communicate to you. A bishop is never alone since he finds himself in living and dynamic communion with the Pope and with his brother bishops of the whole world. You are not alone: you are sustained by the spiritual presence of this your elder brother, and you are surrounded by the affective communion of thousands of brothers.

However, I wish to invite you to reflect on another, more reduced, but not less important dimension of communion: the communion among yourselves, members of that beloved Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua.

This communion which finds its origin in the fullness of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, is not merely external, nor is it brought about by human arrangements or protocol;

it is a sacramental communion and as such ought to be acted upon.

I must confess that nothing can give me greater joy than that of knowing that there prevails among you, over and above all that could divide you, this essential unity in Christ and in the Church. It is a unity that is all the more demanding and necessary since on it will depend on the one hand, the credibility of your preaching and the effectiveness of your apostolate, and on the other, that communion which, in view of the well-known difficulties, it is your mission to build up among the faithful.

### *Sign and instrument of unity*

Now it seems to us that this unity of the faithful is perhaps the most precious quality—because it is fragile and threatened—of this Church, yours and ours, of Nicaragua.

That which the Second Vatican Council declared about the universal Church—namely that it is both a sign and instrument of the unity that is to be built up in the world and among all men (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1)—can be applied in due measure to the ecclesial communities at all levels.

Wherefore the Church in Nicaragua has the great responsibility of being a sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument of unity in the country. For this reason she herself as a community should be a true unity and an image of unity.

In this respect it must be remembered that the more ferment of discord, disunion and separation that are to be found in a particular place, the more must the Church be a sphere of unity and cohesion. But she will be this only if she gives witness to being *cor unum et anima una* through the use of the supernatural principles of unity which are sufficiently strong and clear so as to overcome the forces of division to which she also finds herself subject.

Since by divine vocation you are visible signs of unity, would that the Christians of your land were not divided by reason of opposing ideologies, gathered together as they are by “one only Lord, one only God and Father”, as they are in the habit of singing, taking their inspiration from the

words of the Apostle Paul. Would that your Christians united by the same faith, would reject all that is contrary to or destroys that unity; and would meet one another joined together by the gospel ideals of justice, peace, solidarity, communion and participation, without being divided irretrievably by contingent options arising from certain systems, currents, parties or organizations.

From this point of view your responsibility grows since it is around the bishop that the unity of the faithful should be built up in the concrete.

You know the great importance of the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, both because of the authority of the writer—a disciple of the beloved apostle—and because of their antiquity which makes of them a testimony to a vital moment in the history of the Church, and also because of the richness of their doctrinal content. Now it is Ignatius who with forceful terms shows in these letters, certainly in reply to the earliest difficulties that had arisen in this matter, that there is not, nor can there be, any valid or lasting communion in the Church except through the union of mind and heart, of respect and obedience, of sentiments and action, with the bishop. The cords of the lyre is a beautiful image and suggests a deeper reality: the bishop is like Jesus Christ made present in the midst of his Church as the living and dynamic principle of unity. Without him this unity does not exist or, is falsified and, therefore, is inconsistent and ephemeral.

From this we can see how absurd and dangerous it is to imagine that there exists alongside of — without actually saying contrary to—the Church built up around the bishop, another Church regarded as “charismatic” and not institutional, “new” and not traditional, an alternative and, as has been recently advocated, a “Popular Church”.

I am not unaware that one can attribute to this last name—synonymous with “a Church that takes its origin from the people”—a meaning that is acceptable. By it one wishes to emphasize that the Church comes into being when a community of persons, especially of persons who by their littleness, humility and poverty are open to the Christian message, welcomes the Good News of Jesus Christ, and begins to live according to it in a community of faith, love, hope, prayer, of celebration of and partici-

pation in the Christian mysteries, especially in the Eucharist.

But you are aware that the concluding document of the Third Episcopal Conference of Latin America at Puebla declared that this title "Popular Church" is not a happy one (cf. n. 263). This was done after mature study and reflection among the bishops of the entire continent, because they were aware that this title in general conceals another reality.

"Popular Church" in its most common acceptation, as can be seen in the writings of a certain theological trend, means a Church that takes its origin much rather from the so-called values of a certain strata of the population than from the free and gratuitous initiative of God. It means a Church that ends with the autonomy of the so-called *bases*, without reference to the legitimate pastors or teachers; or at least puts the "rights" of these former above the authority and charisms which are perceived through faith in the latter. It means also—since the term "people" lends itself easily to a content that is markedly sociological and political—the Church incarnate in the popular organizations characterized by ideologies. These organizations are put at the service of their claims, their programmes, and groups that are considered as not belonging to the people. It is easy to see—and the document of Puebla indicates this—that the concept "Popular Church" can scarcely avoid the infiltration of strongly ideological connotations, along the lines of a certain political radicalization, of class warfare, of the acceptance of violence to attain certain ends, etc.

#### *Pastoral warning*

When I myself in my inaugural address to the Assembly at Puebla made serious reservations about the title "Church that takes its origin from the people", I had in mind the dangers that I have just recalled. For this reason I feel it my duty now to repeat, using your voices for the purpose, the same pastoral warning with affection and with clarity. It is a call to your faithful people through your intermediary.

A "Popular Church" as opposed to the Church presided over by its legitimate pastors is—from the point of view of the teaching of the Lord and of the Apostles in the New Testament and also in the ancient and recent teaching of

the solemn magisterium of the Church—a serious departure from the will and plan of salvation of Jesus Christ. It is besides, a principle of division and rupture of that unity which he left as a characteristic sign of the Church itself, and which he wished to confide precisely to those whom “the Holy Spirit established to rule the Church of God (Acts 20:28).

I entrust therefore to you, beloved brethren in the episcopate, the assignment and task of making this call of fundamental importance to your faithful people with patience and firmness.

None of us can forget the dramatic concept of my predecessor Paul VI, when he wrote in his memorable exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that the most insidious dangers and the most deadly attacks against the Church are not those that come from without — these can only strengthen her in her mission and her work — but rather those that come from within.

Let all the sons of the Church then, in this historic moment for Nicaragua and for the Church in that country, strive to preserve intact the communion around their pastors while avoiding anything that may be a seed of rupture or division.

Let this call find an echo above all in the conscience of priests, be they either from the country, or missionaries who for years have consecrated their lives to the pastoral ministry in that nation, or volunteers wishing to give their help to their Nicaraguan brothers at a time of the greatest consequence. Let them be aware that if they really wish to serve the people as priests, this people is hungering and thirsting for God and full of love for the Church, and expects of them the announcement of the Gospel, the proclamation of the fatherhood of God, the administration of the sacramental mysteries of salvation. The people want to have them near, not with a political role, but with their priestly ministry.

#### *Available to serve*

Let this call find an echo also in the consciences of religious men and women whether they be natives of the country or have come from outside. The people of this country want to see them united with the bishops in an

unbreakable ecclesial communion and bearers of a message that is not parallel to or, worse still, opposed to that of the lawful pastors, but rather in harmony with it and consistent with it.

May this message be welcomed by all those who by any title find themselves at the sincere service of the mission of the Church, especially if they are in a position of particular responsibility as for example, in the university, the centres of study and research, the media of social communications, etc. Let them make themselves available to serve in conformity with the equally generous and resolute arrangements of their bishops and of the very large portion of the people who with the bishops are seeking the good of the country while taking as their inspiration the directives of the Church.

Finally I exhort you, beloved brothers, to persevere even in the midst of no small difficulties with your untiring work to ensure the active presence of the Church in this historic moment that the country is going through.

### *Convincing witness*

Under your direction as solicitous pastors, may the Catholic faithful of Nicaragua constantly give a clear and convincing witness of love and capacity for service to their country, second in nothing, not even in efficiency, to that of the rest. It should be a witness of farsightedness in facing events and situations, a witness of full availability to serve the authentic cause of the people, of courage to propose, in every situation the thought and directives — what I have often called *the way*—of the Church, even when these are not in agreement with other ways that are proposed.

I desire, I hope, I ask you to do all that lies in your power to bring it about that fidelity to Christ and to the Church among yourselves and your people, far from diminishing, will rather strengthen and enrich loyalty to the earthly Fatherland.

I am happy on this occasion to impart to you fraternally, my cordial Apostolic Blessing, which I extend also to all your faithful.

## 2 : TO THE BISHOPS OF EL SALVADOR

Beloved Brothers in the Episcopate :

On the solemnity of the Transfiguration of the Lord, a feast so loved by your Nation which bears the name of Christ the Saviour and has chosen him as patron, I desire once again to send you, Reverend Brothers in the Episcopate, a word of support and encouragement in your pastoral activity. With it I wish to testify once again my affectionate solicitude and my sharing in your anxieties and cares. I wish above all that this word of mine be a renewed call to peace and reconciliation.

You are not unaware, and in the past you have shown this on various occasions, that among the various aspects of the mission of each bishop—as I recalled to the bishops of Argentina during my recent visit—one of the most outstanding and urgent is that of revealing himself as “the artificer of harmony, of peace and of reconciliation”, not only within the ecclesial sphere to safeguard and strengthen the bonds of unity, but also within the national community in the face of divisions and oppositions that cannot but cause anxiety to you as pastors, bearers of a message of salvation which invites men to human brotherhood and solidarity.

As I renew this exhortation to you, I am perfectly aware that the discords and divisions which still disturb your country and are the cause of new conflicts and acts of violence, have their true and profound root in the situations of social injustice : this is a problem which has broken out with force at the political level, but it is above all an ethical problem.

### *Violence not justified*

The methodology of violence which has led to a fratricidal war—placing on one side those who consider armed conflict as a necessary instrument to bring about a new social order, and on the other side those who have recourse to the principles of “national security” to legitimize brutal repressions—finds no rational, and much less Christian justification.

Faced with the methods of violence, it becomes necessary to set up the methods of that peace which “should be

achieved in truth, should be built up on justice, should be prompted by love, should be accomplished in liberty" (cf. Message for World Day of Peace, 1 Jan. 1981).

You know very well, Reverend Brothers, that the Church, ever solicitous in favour of man in his full integrity and dignity (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 13-14), guards and fosters these values; she constructs on them a solid defence of the rights of the human person (*ibid.*, 17) and of the very moral and cultural identity of a Christian nation. She has recourse to them to form the moral strength of a country when there is question of overcoming a crisis whose relevance is moral even more than social.

It is thus that I make myself interpreter, in union with you, of the deep aspirations of your people who for a long time now are eager to see become a reality the authentic ideas they have of liberty, of the dignity of the human person, of social justice, which are all based on love in its two aspects: towards God, provident father and giver of all good, and towards the brethren.

To your faithful, thirsting for truth and justice, you must continue to offer, with all fervour and enthusiasm, the strict teachings of the social doctrine of the Church, you must be moved by a lively solicitude for the sufferings of the nation, be in agreement as you propose an adequate response to the demands of the present moment, and united by a renewed impulse in your pastoral activity.

With the new institutional perspectives that have been opened to the country in recent times the task becomes all the more urgent of incarnating the methods of peace in the ministry of reconciliation by means of the word of the Gospel and actions that find their inspiration in this word.

Reconciliation is not a sign of weakness or cowardice; nor is it a renunciation of due justice or of the defence of the poor and those on the fringe of society. It is rather a meeting between brothers who are disposed to overcome the temptation to egoism and to renounce the attempts of pseudo-justice. It is the fruit of sentiments that are strong, noble and generous that lead to establishing a coexistence based on respect for each individual and on the values that are proper to each civil society.

That reconciliation, therefore, should be capable of

realization at all levels, and above all, among brothers who take up arms, moved by contrary interests and guided by ideologies which sacrifice the fundamental aspirations of the human person. For both one and the other, an indispensable condition for reconciliation is the cessation of all hostility and the renunciation of the use of arms with the secure guarantee that nobody will be the object of reprisals or of vengeance after he has given his adherence to the noble intent of joining forces and initiatives in order to guarantee for the country a renewed vitality and an ordered progress.

Reconciliation ought to be effected also in the area of the family, to which you have dedicated particular attention in the Collective Postoral Letter of 24 December of last year; in the parishes and other wider sectors of the Church; in the area of work where so frequently the human problems that trouble the national community become more acute.

You Reverend Brothers in the Episcopate—and with you your collaborators—are called to be ministers and witnesses of the work of reconciliation in the perspective of the gospel ideal of charity, which Christ proposed to his followers and to all men, and which is the only remedy that can resolve the contradictions inherent in the social phenomenology of disunion, of disorders, of injustice, and of armed conflict.

To your collaborators and faithful I send, through you, a call to hope, that may sustain them in the difficult circumstances of the present moment and help them in the fulfilment of their duties.

On you, Reverend Brothers, and on the most beloved sons of the entire Nation, I implore from Christ the Saviour, “our peace and our reconciliation” abundant divine graces in pledge of which I impart sincerely a special Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican, 6 August 1982.

JOANNES PAULUS PP. II

This article, though written some months ago is in no way dated. On the contrary, it appears to us to delineate, with clarity and objectivity, the real issues at stake, not only in El Salvador, but in Central America as a whole. Acknowledgements to our Australian contemporary, *Social Order*.

# Central America and Politicized Religion

JAMES V. SCHALL, S.J.

IN the days of Archbishop Oscar Romero, "there was hope in liberation movements", says Arturo Rivera y Damas, the then acting Archbishop of San Salvador. "There was a great sympathy on the part of the people. Later, these movements were losing credibility and popular support. I don't think they lost only because of government repression. *They lost this support because the people saw that they tended toward power for its own sake and not toward satisfying the hopes of the people*" (*The Washington Post*, March 9, 1981).

Several of the newspapers that reported the interview in which these remarks were made ran the story under headlines stating that the Archbishop wanted all U.S. Military aid to El Salvador to stop. What is interesting about this is that the transcript of the Archbishop's comments shows that he wanted *both* U.S. and other outside aid to end. Another Salvadorean, Bishop Pedro Arnaldo Aparicio, was even blunter: "The Church in El Salvador does not want military aid from the United States if all Soviet aid to the guerrillas stops. While Russia is supplying the guerrillas with arms, we need the United States to help to strengthen our own army. It is no longer a war between Salvadoreans but a war between foreigners. Leftists in El Salvador have received tons of sophisticated weapons not only from Russia, but also from other Soviet bloc nations.

I have talked with some of the refugees who claim they have seen mercenaries who are tall and light-skinned fighting alongside the guerrillas".

### *One-sided Reporting*

Why the one-sided reporting? Or rather, why the passion to withdraw aid unilaterally? The United States Bishops Conference officially favours a unilateral end to U.S. aid, and religious groups in the United States have launched a very thorough campaign to promote this policy. Why do so many foreign clergy so vigorously seek to stop American arms from reaching El Salvador while ignoring Cuban and Soviet military aid and infiltration?

Two other quotations are, perhaps, to the point here. First, Michael Novak:

"The International Left has created a world publicity when they define the moral issues involved in El Salvador, but are on weaker ground when they oppose U.S. military aid to the Salvadorean government . . . I agree with their vision of what the future of El Salvador should be, namely a negotiated, just settlement in which the situation of justice and human rights would be much more satisfactory than it is . . . But the bishops are 'on weaker ground when they argue on tactics', such as an end to U.S. military aid. Our government officials have argued that a remarkable amount of arms was shipped into El Salvador through a consortium of nations including the Eastern bloc and notably Vietnam. As arms were shipped through Nicaragua and Cuba during a period when the U.S. Government was not supplying any arms to El Salvador, American officials decided tactically it was essential to do some modest supplying of arms to the government of El Salvador in reply . . ." (*The National Catholic Register*, May 10, 1981).

### *Propaganda Campaign*

The second quotation is from Jose Napoleon Duarte:

"The International Left has created a world publicity machinery with a political strategy designed to form an image far from the Salvadorean reality. It has put

all its force into supplying financially and technically the Marxist Left. The Church has been used by the Left and the socialist parties with the sole intention of creating an image as certain that does not correspond to the reality . . . The cables of UPI and Associated Press go further in describing the conditions for the Government and the Salvadorean people. For no one in El Salvador is it a secret that the people reject the Communist Left. We have seen that this latter movement has called more than once a national work stoppage and the people have continued their daily work, ignoring the threats of the Communists, who have set on fire buses, department stores, restaurants and factories. It is a terror on a grand scale to atomize the people, destroying the sources of work and destabilizing the national economy" (*Tiempo Latino*, September 24, 1980).

These two statements at least have the advantage of addressing the real problems and their causes. Let me fill out the conte't with a few of my own recollections.

### *Jesuit Marxists*

In 1977, when I was teaching at the University of San Francisco, there was a young Salvadorean woman in one of my classes. Through family, friends, and her own experience, she knew a good deal about El Salvador and about the various agencies of the Salvadorean Left in the United States, especially in San Francisco. From time to time over the years, I have sent to her for her comments samples of the enormous amount of news I was receiving about El Salvador from the Catholic Press. Finally, she asked me one day, "Tell me, why are the Jesuits at the Colegio in San Salvador City Marxists?" I told her that I did not know they were, though I confessed that I did not know they were not either. "To some", I said philosophically, "all are Marxists who think differently about social systems". She shrugged her shoulders and wondered why the Catholic Press in San Francisco regularly printed mostly Leftist news sent up here by leftist agencies for that very purpose.

Recently at Georgetown University, another young student came up to me after class. He told me that he

had lived in Guatemala for a time. The previous evening, he had had dinner with a couple just up from El Salvador. They too wanted to know why the Jesuits there were Marxists.

### *Orbis Press*

No one familiar with the Christian literature on Latin America—much of it published, financed and promoted in the United States by the Maryknoll Fathers' Orbis Press—will be surprised by the students' questions. Many clergy in Latin America are indeed perceived by the people to be Marxist or aiding Marxist causes. Bishop Aparicio of El Salvador's San Vincente Diocese captured the common perception as well as anyone: "There are many (clergy) that joined the so-called 'armed struggle', but most of the clergy that did so have abandoned the country . . . Their main function now is to create propaganda against El Salvador. Some are Salvadoreans, and a few are foreigners from the Jesuit Order" (From an interview with the Bishop).

Recently, I signed a statement published in the *New York Times*, urging support for a Democratic Centre in El Salvador. Some time later, I received a letter from Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick, S.J., a well-known sociologist at Fordham University, addressed to all the Jesuits who had signed the statement in the *Times*. In the letter (April 10), Fr. Fitzpatrick suggested a loyalty principle, since several Salvadorean Jesuits, according to him, had been put on a "hit list" by the Right. In general, he said, Jesuits in El Salvador do "support the Popular Organizations which constitute the major segments of the Frente Revolucionario Democratico and have sympathy at least with members of the Frente who have taken up arms". He emphasized that, in Nicaragua, the priests engaged in "advising" the Government have not been ordered out of politics. (According to the Italian paper *L'Avvenire* of May 22, 1980, the Nicaraguan bishops did order the priests out of politics, but it is difficult to know just how free the Nicaraguan bishops are in their relations to the clergy in government.)

## *Land Reform*

In El Salvador, the letter went on, land reform will not work. What is needed is a negotiated peace, which even the acting Archbishop supports, to bring "the Frente Democratico effectively into the Government". I was further assured, in spite of my suspicions about where such policies almost always lead, that "the Jesuits are not not Marxists; they are not Communists, nor are they duped by Communist infiltrators". In short, there is no problem in El Salvador except Rightist extremists, U.S. military aid, the Duarte Government, and the rich accusing the clergy of Marxism.

There is a sharp contrast between the belief of ordinary people in El Salvador that Marxist elements are common in the Church, particularly among the "foreign" clergy, usually American and Spanish, and the picture Fr. Fitzpatrick and much of the American Christian Press paint of a clergy selflessly working on behalf of the poor. This dichotomy illustrates the confusion in the Christian churches today about the integrity of their practical teachings in relation to contemporary ideologies.

Another piece of the context, of course, is what has happened in Nicaragua. In its issue of June 13, 1981, *The Economist* of London summarized recent developments in his way:

"The Sandinist guerrilla jefes who run Nicaragua resemble the characters in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* who began as liberators but swiftly became new tyrants. They are at odds with the leaders of the country's Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic-backed human rights commission has been closed down because it reported that the regime is holding 7,000 political prisoners—making Nicaragua one of the worst offenders in Latin America. Elections, considered 'divisive' by the Sandinistas, have been postponed until 1985. The only Party that has emerged in outright opposition to the Sandinistas, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, had its first major rally in March broken up by gangs of Sandinistas. The country's literacy campaign (run by a Jesuit) has become a revolutionary teach-in . . . There are believed to be some

4,000 Cubans in Nicaragua, about a quarter of them military trainers . . . But Nicaragua, which under its old Somoza dictatorship was policed by just 7,000 national guardsmen, now has a 40,000 strong army . . ." The fear that El Salvador may go the way of Nicaragua, then, need not be muffled by any confusion about which "way" this might be.

Curt Meyer has probably given the best analysis of what we should expect in the region:

"The Soviet-assisted Cuban strategy for Central America should now be apparent to anyone prepared to put the various pieces of the puzzle together. While keeping the guerrilla resistance in El Salvador alive by clandestine arms deliveries and the continuous infiltration of new recruits trained in Cuba, Castro's main objective is to consolidate his foothold in Nicaragua until the Sandinistas are sufficiently organized to eliminate their domestic opposition. Once the Nicaraguan base has been secured by the establishment of a one-party Police State on the Cuban model, there will be time enough for a massive infusion of volunteers to turn the tide of the Salvadorean civil war and to open the way for a final guerrilla offensive into Guatemala, where a savagely representative right-wing government may be ripe for the plucking" (*The Washington Star*, May 9, 1981).

This analysis, of course, shows where the real trouble lies for many religious people. Christians seem largely to have given up any political realism that might have suggested to them where things are really going to in Central America.

### *Democratic Slogans*

Lezek Kolakowski (in *Kontinent* N. 10, 1979) suggested something quite similar: "Those Christians who recently fought against the *corrupt* regime in South Vietnam today fill the concentration camps of a *united* Vietnam—precious little about this, it would appear, is reported in the progressivist Catholic publications. The police-state Communist dictatorships have everywhere been introduced under democratic—never communist—slogans".

So the stakes are high for Christians urging "change" in El Salvador through ecclesiastical political action and campaigns for social justice. The central question is this: Is religion being used, knowingly or unknowingly, to put another people into a closed Marxist system? Will this prove to be the first time the Catholic Church was used to support a revolution that turned out to be Marxist? Indeed, since the Salvadorean bishops themselves seem to be under no illusions on this score, will the clergy and hierarchy from other countries earn this distinction?

### *Deception*

With the advice of Fidel Castro, the present Central American Left has learned a certain caution. It has realized the value of a prudent course aimed at not antagonizing, but who is being deceived? The American clergy who tell us not to worry, or the Salvadorean student who knows Marxist teachings when he sees them? Former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Julian Nava said in a recent interview, "I am often surprised by the naivete, fed by ignorance, on the part of well-meaning Americans who can't draw the distinction between a genuine domestic desire for radical reform and a social revolution greatly inspired and supported by the Russian-bloc countries" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 8, 1981). The Salvadorean people do not support the revolution, as my young friend told me years ago; the evidence for this—including the failure of the people to rise in January 1981—is overwhelming. But then do the generality of the Salvadorean people, along with their bishops, suspect that a Police State is in store for them if the "revolution" succeeds?

### *Serving an Ideology*

For some time now, Christian groups have been officially "opting" to support the "revolution" in El Salvador and Nicaragua (with bigger fish on the horizon, North and South). Invariably, the justification has been the will to overthrow a tyrannical government or a "national security" state or to "help the poor". Always, impeccable democratic slogans have been invoked. *Maryknoll Magazine* (August, 1980) published a glowing report on religion and civil life in Cuba; ironically, the issue appeared about

the time tens of thousands of actual Cubans were escaping by boat. Fidel Castro, I believe, said these escapees were mostly criminals and degenerates. "Normal" people do not want to leave Marxist States, as the Soviet use of psychiatric hospitals and high walls proves. The question also arises whether "aiding the poor" means imposing an absolutist system wherein everyone is controlled by a powerful state, party, police and army, all in the *name* of the poor. More importantly, one wonders whether anyone can tell the difference between a free and a controlled system. If we vigorously protest abuses in El Salvador, Chile and Argentina, but have nothing to say about Cambodia or the killing of the opposition in Angola, are we not serving an ideology rather than coming to the defence of "human rights?"

The *Monitor*, the Catholic newspaper in San Francisco for which I write a column, has had a major article on Central America almost every week for a year. Evidently, this material is considered religious-related news, and El Salvador is seen as a "test" case. Recently, Fr. Fernando Cardenal, S.J., Nocaragua's Literacy Director, was interviewed at length in *The Monitor*. He told of a meeting with Fidel Castro. His comments are remarkable. Castro came to Nicaragua in the summer of 1980 for the celebration of the first anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution, and Fr. Cardenal had several opportunities to speak with the Cuban leader. "This was a most interesing subject with Señor Castro", Fr. Cardenal said, "this business of the Church identifying with the poor and working for them and the support of the revolution in Nicaragua by Christians. In fact, this Christian support gave the revolution its own special character. The Church's leadership in the formation of the people was very important in Nicaragua. The education had been going on for 12 or 13 years, it brought a certain consciousness to our people. It not only taught them Christian love, but it taught them how this love has o be carried out into our own history and our own lives" (April 16, 1981, p. 7).

Christian "love" turns out to be identical with the structures of the Nicaraguan revolution. Religion and politics are rejoined. The Cuban Church before the revolution was different. It was not "for the poor". But now, the

alliance of Church and Marxism is possible because the Church has changed. The old opposition of the Church to Communism expressed in Pius XI's Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (1937) can be quietly dropped, not because Marxism is different, but because the Church is. Clearly Fidel was right: a Church no longer reluctant to support the revolution alters the process of Marxist takeover in a way that would have pleased even Lenin.

### *A Different Church*

As Fr. Cardenal fraternally explained to Fidel Castro, the way for religious people to "help" the poor is to join the revolution. Yet many see in this sort of thinking a fatal confusion of tactics and strategy that will push poor people into an absolutist embrace through an identification of religion and ideology in the name of Christian love. In Poland, by contrast, the Church understood that to survive it must define itself minimally, restricting itself to administering the Sacraments, preaching, praying, clearly knowing what it stood for. No one had any doubt about who the enemy was or how he got there. Accommodation was an intelligible course given the realities of power. But to promote what Archbishop Rivera y Damas called "power for its own sake" in the name of the Christian religion is another matter, one with serious political consequences.

### *A Lesser Evil?*

"The first step in the reconstruction of U.S. policy for Latin America", according to Jeane Kirkpatrick (U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations) "is intellectual" (*Commentary*, January 1981). That is to say, we must understand the political, economic and military forces at work, the ideas behind them, and where they actually lead when put into effect. Without being a determinist, one can make reasonable projections. We must also understand the most elementary lesson of political experience: that the worst political systems are too often the products of good ideas. When we decide to classify a Diem, a Somoza, a Gierek or a Castro as "corrupt", we do not necessarily know whether changing his regime, even in the

name of the poor, will make it more "corrupt" or perhaps differently "corrupt". Even less do we know whether changing it will help the poor. And until we reach the prudential conclusion that it will, the present "corrupt" regime may have to be regarded as the lesser evil. Whether it actually is the lesser evil must be judged not in the light, however brilliant, of pure theory (designed ultimately to cure our deviant human condition) but in the light of experience and experiment. This is why Plato and Aristotle thought we should study the decline of states, corrupt forms of rule, as well as good ones. Even religious people can learn from this exercise. Mgr. Obrando of Managua put it in a more poetic way, perhaps: "I have already said many times that, in the beginning, every revolution displays a revolutionary fervour; every revolution is presented in a messianic and redemptive character. There is an instant in which all the people are enthusiastic with a revolutionary ferment. Then follows a second step, wherein reality falls about the people. The promises which they believed were till now quite possible suddenly become a disappointment for the people who at first had the revolutionary fervour as they reach reality" (*Tiempo Latino*, San Francisco, September 24, 1980). Most of the movements that have made human life worse marched off in glory to make it better. To remember this is not necessarily to endorse the status quo; but to forget it is almost certainly to baptize some monsters.

### *Deception or Self-Deception*

"That which in the language of progressivism is designated as Christian-Marxist dialogue", Lezek Kolakowski went on, "is almost always the work of deception or self-deception. For the most part, this 'dialogue' rests on the exchange of non-binding humanitarian slogans whose main purpose is to conceal the actual areas of opposition, to cover historical experience with magic formulae". When Archbishop Rivera y Damas talked at Trinity College in Washington recently, a tabloid was made available by a group called the Quixote Centre of Hyattsville, Maryland, entitled "The Church Reflects on El Salvador". The "reflecting" church consisted of a reprint of Archbishop

James Hickey's testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, side by side with a document purporting to come from 13 religious groups in El Salvador (but not mentioning the bishops of El Salvador) entitled "Insurrection in El Salvador". For anyone who has read, say, Fr. Giulio Girardi's *Cristenismo, Liberazione Umana. Lotta di Classe*, perhaps the best attempt to join class struggle and revolutionary conflict with Christian thought, these passages from the Salvadorean document are revealing:

"We as Christian, men and women religious, clergy, who work in the diverse areas of pastoral ministry, education, social development, and humanitarian aid, want also to accompany the people in these moments, acknowledge the justice of their cause and their struggle, and recognize the legitimate right which moves them to insurrection . . . The government, consequently, is not legitimate. It does not seek nor secure the common good, but is drowning the country in blood. It has the support only of the oligarchy, the security forces, some military and the government of the United States. The Salvadorean people repudiate it and have banded into democratic, popular and revolutionary organizations to put an end to the barbarity and secure a lasting and just peace . . . An insurrection for the liberation of a people is not only a legitimate historical reality, but, for Christians it is also a sign of the times through which God speaks to and calls us . . . In this situation, an uprising speaks to us of resurrection. An oppressed people, crucified like Christ, like the Servant of Yehweh, sheds once again its blood for the life of the poor masses . . ."

### *Substitution*

Recent radical theology has endeavoured to substitute "the suffering masses" for Christ as the main way to recast Christian theology in revolutionary terms. This passage is a good example of this sort of thinking, the implications of which are unfortunately obscure to generations of American academics brought up without the knowledge of religion or theology that would enable them

to understand the political importance of religious ideas. Interesting too, in connection with this document, that an earlier version of it (as yet signed by only 10 religious groups from El Salvador) had been sent to me previously by the Office of Jesuit Missions in Washington. The cover letter, dated January 14, 1982, explained that the occasion for this mailing was "the restoration of military aid to El Salvador by our government yesterday . . ." The document had been communicated from Managua, Nicaragua, on January 9, 1981—for just what religious purpose is difficult to imagine.

### *Stock in Trade*

But political ideas and movements coming from Central America almost invariably do have religious overtones. Phrases like "options for the poor", "stop the killing", "human rights", "Christians for Socialism", "guerrillas", "military regime for national security", "martyrdom of the Salvadorean clergy", "equitable distribution", "land reform", and "sinful social structures" are their stock in trade. It is important, then, to ascertain in what ranks such pious and not so pious legions march. Are these movements capable of reaching their goals on the basis of their actual record and present structures? How do they touch American interests? Should we simply assume the virtues of "pure Socialism" or "Christian Marxism", as do so many publications about Latin America, often with ecclesiastical imprimatur? Are the Soviets and Cubans successfully "using" religion, or is religion "using" them to pursue some dream of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth?

On the other hand, there are norms of economic progress, political liberty, religious truth, and human worth, and they must be constantly proposed and firmly held. Even regimes that are only tolerated as evils must be judged by these standards — not continually "disestablished" in the name of some abstract moral-religious truth, regardless of the realities of political change.

In this second and concluding part of his article, Father Houghton shows how exponents of the Catholic Faith have fallen victim to the determinism of the age, which had its origins in Darwin, its tragic follow-up in Marx and, later, Hitler; its religious expression in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin.

## Irreligion : 2

FATHER BRYAN HOUGHTON

*Darwin, Pasteur and Mendel*

IT is exactly a century ago, in 1882, that Darwin died, as is known to every Englishman, since recently he has had to stick on an envelope a stamp bearing Darwin's grizzly face, suitably surrounded by some equally extinct but clean-shaven reptiles. Since then, he has become the prophet of our brave, new world : taught in every school, preached in every university, proclaimed by the media. The *Descent of Man* is now 111 years old and the *Origin of Species* 123. Presumably, in that long time, a mass of incontrovertible evidence has accumulated to prove beyond any conceivable doubt that Darwin's daring hypotheses were true.

Actually, 1859 was rather an unfortunate date for the publication of the *Origin*. It was in the ensuing ten years that Pasteur laid the foundations of modern bacteriology; which was consequently unknown to Darwin. Worse still, in 1866 Mendel opened up the whole science of genetics by publishing his experiments on peas. The case of Mendel is particularly significant. It is perfectly clear that his findings imposed limits, to say the least, on natural selection. But, by 1866, Darwin was already the Supreme Pontiff of the natural sciences. What was one to do with Mendel ? Ignore him ! This was done all the more easily as he happened to be a retrograde, Austrian, R.C. abbot. I have it on Dr. Bronowski's uninpeachable evidence that Mendel's experiments were never discussed at university level until some thiry-five years later, in the early 1900's.

There was—and still is—a far harsher scientific index than was ever the Index of the Holy Office. However, the point is that Darwin was antemendelian if not antedeluvian.

### *Darwinist Determinism Under Fire*

As was only to be expected, the implications arising from the work of Pasteur were examined first and foremost in France, if only because of the language difficulty. Mendel's peas consequently found the seed-ground well prepared. Hence, the only steady opposition to Darwinian determinism, in biology in general and in botany and genetics in particular, has been and still is French. In this connection, Jacki (p. 288) quotes the 1937 edition of the French Encyclopaedia (vol. V, pp. 82-88): "It follows from what has been said that the theory of evolution is impossible... Evolution is a kind of dogma in which its priests no longer believe but continue to preach to the people. So much for a subject which one must have the courage to enunciate clearly, so that future generations should direct their research along different lines". Such a statement could not get into an encyclopaedia in the U.S.A. and could not be expressed so bluntly in England. I shall return to the French scene in due course.

It was at much the same time that Mendel began to be taken seriously, at the start of the century, that doubt arose as to the eternity and infinity of the universe. In 1897, Max Planck's "quantum theory" not only supposed a finite quantity of energy, but "entropy" was precisely the measure of the energy, which was not transferable. If all energy was not transferable, it became extremely difficult to see how the universe could be eternal.

Hot in the footsteps of Planck came Einstein. The curvature of light indicated that the universe was in fact finite; moreover it was expanding. Besides, light had an absolute speed, which made the time-space ratio a fourth dimension; as limiting and finite as the other three. Perhaps more important was his theory of general relativity. Although everything in the universe is entirely specific—as specific as our finger-prints—nonetheless, everything is related in the time-space dimension. Just as "specificity" looks singularly like a scientific term for contingency, so does "general relativity" look suspiciously like teleology—order and

purpose. It is consequently no longer surprising to find eminent scientists expressing a feeling of awe; a feeling incompatible with determinism.

In this connection, Jacki as usual has the apt quotation to hand (p. 274). It is taken from Sir Bernard Lovell's presidential address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science on August 27th, 1975. Referring to the first second after the expansion of the universe had got under way, Sir Bernard said : "It is an astonishing reflection that if the interaction (of protons and neutrons) were only a few percent stronger, then all the hydrogen in the primaevial condensate would have been turned into helium in the early stages of expansion. No galaxies, no stars, no life would have emerged. It would be a universe forever unknowable by living creatures". Yes, the reflection is astonishing. But more important, Sir Bernard admits to his astonishment. He has the natural reaction to teleology; awe.

Incidentally, it is not only in the Darwinian West that determinism has come under fire. In the Marxist East, cosmology as such has no longer been studied in the universities of the USSR from 1936 onwards, precisely because it laid itself too open to metaphysics, that is to contingency and teleology. So much for the objectivity of Soviet science.

### *Teilhard and Religious Determination*

It is time I returned to France. Sooner rather than later, everything in that wonderful country gets turned into politics. Opposition to atheistic determinism was clearly a clerical plot against the Third Republic. Hence the extraordinary anti-Catholic laws of Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes at the start of the century. One of their results was to exile the French Jesuit novitiate to England. Suddenly these splendid, dedicated young men were exposed to the full blast of evolution, from which they had been protected in France. It is difficult for us to imagine the impact. We, the indigenous natives, accepted the irreligion of Darwin in the same vague sort of way that we accepted the religion of Anglicanism. As a little boy, it was in much the same spirit that I was hoiked off to visit the tomb of St. Edward in Westminster Abbey and the Piltdown Skull

in the Natural History Museum. We had been inoculated at an early age. Not so the young Jesuits.

It so happened that among these young Jesuits was a lyrical poet of the first order, one Teilhard de Chardin. Along with his poetic imagination he brought to evolution all the determination and heroism engendered by the Spiritual Exercises. The result is there for all to see: *The Phenomenon of Man*. His "mind-world" (or, however else "noosphere" gets translated) without the Fall and sin, his point Omega without ever a point Alpha, is all pure determinism with a bit of poetic licence thrown in. The only evidence of theism in his cosmology is his point Omega: apparently he did not believe in the Eternal Return. The fact of the matter is that Teilhard was introducing mechanical determinism into religion just as Marx had introduced it into history, Darwin into biology and Spencer into physics. They are all foals from the same stable. Where he disagrees with the others is not in principle but in practice: to Teilhard the spearhead of the evolutionary process is not the Party, nor the Herrenvolk, nor the play of democracy, but religion.

This is not to deny Teilhard's personal piety. Indeed, he had the spirit of a mediaeval monk. He felt so certain of his facts that, if physical evidence was lacking, he was prepared to provide it. As the mediaeval monk produced false relics out of pure devotion and conviction, so has Teilhard given us the Piltdown Skull and Peking Man.

It would, of course, be absurd to imagine that Teilhard was the only priest to be caught up in the determinism of his age. His genius lay in expressing what is basically irreligion in religious terms. This is exactly what a great many people want: the worst of both worlds. His success was therefore astonishing and all round us we witness the result. It is not unusual to meet marxist Jesuits, evolutionary Benedictines, free-thinking bishops. But the trouble really lies deeper than such manifestations.

### *Religion and Truth Disconnected*

We have disconnected the notions of "religion" and "truth", which Christianity had united. We have become a "pilgrim church" and wander round "in search" for truth and the shrine of the Unknown God. Having lost the

notion of God the Creator and consequently of a Natural Law other than our conscience, we have become tolerant of every error. And, since man is no longer made in the image of God, we have grown intolerant of persons. We have ceased to think of the creation as God-made and good, to be treated with awe and respect, but as a fortuitous event on which we mechanically improve. The Latin word *salus* has returned to its pagan meaning of "health" and well-being in this world, not to the Christian meaning of salvation in the next. We even proclaim that we expect a Return, the Second Coming; but it is because we recoil from the First, the once-for-all Incarnation and Redemption. And so on. It is fundamental religious attitudes which have changed, so fundamental that few people seem to have noticed them.

What seems odd, however, is that so many ecclesiastics should have found the entrance to mechanical determinism at the very moment that the scientists, the natural philosophers, have discovered the exit. However, as I said at the start of this lecture, irreligion is a by-product of Christianity. It is not, therefore, surprising to find it in the Christian Church. Indeed, those who know what religion is about are the best qualified to deny it.

\* \* \* \*

### EPILOGUE

I closed my lecture at the Centre Charlier with a display of some anti-religious posters. They came from two distinct sources.

I had picked up the first group in 1931 from an Upper School in Moscow. They are forcefully designed but the content is rather naive. They are anti-clerical rather than anti-religious. A typical example is one for use in a history class. It represents the square in front of Notre Dame de Paris with the cathedral in the background. To the right is a leering capitalist, identifiable by his top-hat, in front of whom are Cardinal Verdier (Archbishop of Paris in 1931) and Marshal Foche, who are encouraging some troops on the left side of the poster to massacre a crowd of defenceless workers. Underneath is a quotation from Karl Marx referring to the Paris Commune of 1870/71.

Now, it is obvious that the irreligion might still be true even if Cardinals were in the habit of mowing down the

populace. As anti-religious propaganda it is naive. What is wicked and typically communist about the poster is its falsification of history. It so happens that in May 1871 it was the then Archbishop of Paris, Georges Darboy who, while in prison, was murdered in cold blood by the Communists. You do not just tell a lie but the exact opposite of the truth; it leaves your opponent speechless. It is the technique used so successfully by progressives when they accuse traditionalists of being divisive.

The second group of posters I had acquired in 1981/2 from church porches in France. Although it seems invidious to make a choice, perhaps the most remarkable of these was issued by FOCS, the official organ of the French hierarchy for religious propaganda. It was to be seen in most French churches during the second half of 1981. I removed my copy from the Cathedral at Viviers.

The poster is attractively designed by one Patrick O'Hegerty, presumably a devout Irish artist. In the middle it portrays the cruciform figure of a man in outline, arms outstretched and feet together. But there is no cross behind the figure and the outline indicates that the man is wearing jacket and trousers. It is not Jesus Christ at all but a gentleman (the local P.P.?) skipping for joy in a meadow strewn with flowers. Over his head is written "*La Santé*", Health. In large capitals at the bottom of the poster is the text: "*L'homme vivant c'est la gloire de Dieu*"; "Living man, that is God's glory". I need scarcely point out the blasphemy: Health instead of Salvation; a dancing clown instead of the sacrifice of the Cross; living man as the glory of God instead of the death of Jesus as the salvation of mankind. Incidentally, the caption about living man being the glory of God is a quotation from Saint Irenaeus, unacknowledged and out of context. Only a priest could have thought up such a poster. Only the authority of the legitimate hierarchy could have ensured its display in every church. No Communist, poor fool, could have conceived such dire irreligion.

Yes, irreligion is an inevitable by-product of the True Religion. It seems, however, a pity that the Church should display the by-product and hide the Truth.

*(Concluded)*

# Book Reviews

## SHORTS

I do not like rounding up good books under a title such as that given above and I would like to apologise in advance to their authors and publishers for so doing; but, frankly, I have no other choice, and for reasons that I have given before when such a procedure has been forced on me. Shortage of space is the most prominent villain of this piece. Let me say, then, right away that all of these books are well worth reading. What follows are some comments on each of them.

Ralph Martin's *A Crisis of Truth* (Servant Books, Box 8617, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107, USA; \$10.95; pp. 245), has little that is new concerning the present crisis within the Catholic Church, and what he has to say I found a little too soft-edged for my liking. James Hitchcock has given in more perceptive and incisive fashion what Martin sets out in his pages with patient clarity. Whereas Hitchcock worries at the causes of the confusion that besets us and does so better than anyone I know, Martin describes the situation very well and takes a good look at it. You might say that both approaches are complementary and both serve well the cause of orthodoxy. If I had to choose between them I would come down on the side of Hitchcock; but I would be careful also to recommend Martin for one all-important factor he stresses in his book and that is the underlying cause of the contemporary crisis within the Catholic Church as essentially spiritual. This must never be forgotten. "All we can do now is pray"; "The only thing left now is prayer"—phrases like this betray a somewhat wrong mentality. We can only *begin* to face adequately the neo-modernist crisis if we draw first and foremost on prayer and the Sacraments as the primary, essential and God-given means of rebutting it. Without this the rest is useless : what should be a real struggle for the Faith is turned into no more than a party brawl.

Would this not be the true message of Fatima, with its call for penance, which means discipline and prayer in our CHRISTIAN ORDER, JUNE/JULY, 1983

daily lives, thereby their spiritualization, which means, in turn, their direction towards God; and each day crowned with the rosary. If everyone concentrated on this and the world was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as we hope it will be at the coming Synod by the Holy Father, would we not witness the first beginnings of genuine peace within the Church and the world? The answer, surely, is to try it and see. Deirdre Manifold is right to give Fatima and its message so prominent a place in her recent, brave book, *Fatima and the Great Conspiracy* (Obtainable from St. Duthac's Book Service, 39 Blenheim Park Road, South Croydon, Surrey, U.K.). Neither is she a "crackpot". If she is, then so is Benjamin Disraeli, who spoke of the men of power and, by implication, of such a conspiracy not only in his novel, *Coningsby*, but also in Parliament itself. And so, too, is the late Carrol Quigley who laid bare the domination over the world of International Finance in his great book, *Tragedy and Hope*, first published in 1966 and reprinted subsequently with his authorization, in 1977. He carried his analysis further in a subsequent penetrating work, *The Anglo-American Establishment*, published posthumously in 1981. And Quigley was no fool. Let us be quite clear about that. He was a highly respected professor at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. He was an instructor at Princeton and Harvard Universities; a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defence, the House Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration, and the U.S. Navy. He died in 1977 at the age of sixty-seven. Deirdre Manifold is in a good tradition. The least her book deserves is objectively minded readers who give it a good and careful read.

The same recommendation applies to *Ways of Praying* by Father John Edwards, S.J. (Obtainable from The Catholic Truth Society, P.O. Box 422, 38-40 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PD; UK at £1.95). With writers like Deirdre Manifold and Ralph Martin he shares a profound belief not only in the power, but in the utter necessity of prayer, which they present so vividly against the background of the confusion that racks to the point of crisis both Church and World today. Father Edward comes in at this point to show us how to pray. His book

deals with the mechanics of prayer. Some may feel that this is not for them; they have their own way. I am sure that the author of this most useful book would say, "Right; go ahead". But others will want something like this and want it badly. This book is for them. All things considered, its price is most reasonable and its lay-out excellent and easy to follow.

Next, two books on Communism, one dealing with a case-study of that creed in action, the other with its analysis in general and its relationship with the Church in the contemporary world. The redoubtable, well-versed and much experienced Suzanne Labin is responsible for the case-study, which is that of Chile before and through the Frei and Allende years up to and including the Pinochet period, which is still with us today. The book, entitled, *Chile: the Crime of Resistance* is published by the Foreign Affairs Publishing Co. Ltd., 12, Petersham Rd., Richmond, Surrey, U.K. at £5 and \$10.00. There are two hundred and eighty-two pages to it and these are extremely well indexed. It deserves most careful reading and reflection; raising, perhaps, more questions than it answers, but this is by no means the Author's fault. To my mind, the basic question is that of the *best method* of dealing with the Communist thrust — which, without doubt, is aimed at world enslavement—and of strengthening resistance against it. Is this best done through the National Security State of Chilean, say, or more general South American pattern; or should the Catholic Church work to build her young —as I fear she is not working now—into responsible and *Christian* citizens possessed of the moral fibre that *Grace alone* can bring and that will enable them — through suffering if need be—to win through to genuine peace against the excesses of both Right and Left? Are the representatives of the Church capable of this type of essentially educational and catechetical work at a time like the present, in particular, when the Church is rent with confusion? I have to say that I think they are not. What then do we do? For a start, cease pretending; then face contemporary reality. When that is done, place particular situations like that of Chile under the magnifying-glass of objective truth. Then, have the courage to speak and act in accordance

dance with objective truth. Nothing less will do. Very few have the courage both to face and to do. These few will be greatly helped to understand the Communist side of the equation by a careful reading of a recent book by Father Charles McFadden, O.S.A. entitled, *Christianity Confronts Communism* (Francisan Hearld Press, 1434 W. 51st St., Chicago, Ill. 60609, USA; \$12.50; pp. 423). It might be caled a mini-encyclopoedia of an unpleasant subject, which should be studied by all who have to consider it, even at second-hand. And who are free from this necessity in the contemporary Church? (The same applies to Capitalism). The true contemplatives, I would suggest, and these alone. They are the lucky ones! Let the rest get down to it intelligently. Father McFadden's book will help them to do just that. Teachers and University Chaplains will find it invaluable.

Last but by no means least, the indefatigable Father John W. Mole, O.M.I., whom I have had the privilege of knowing for some years has produced volume one of his typically erudite yet popular *ABC Catechism*, which covers the three-year, liturgical cycle, A, B and C from Advent to Pentecost and which I would describe briefly, but with great sincerity as an absolute godsend for priests and teachers of religion alike. Here are the great themes of the Church's liturgical year treated as they should be by one whose devotion to orthodoxy is proven to the nth. degree; who can be trusted totally to give his readers all that is effective and good and, authentic. I suggest they make a grab for it. It is published by the Franciscan Hearld Press (address above) at the most reasonable price of \$9.50 and there are 247 pages to it. The right job for the right people. Warmly recommended.

—Paul Crane S.J.

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## PLEASE

do pray for Mr. Patrick McAlinden—the generous, loyal and very enthusiastic printer of *Christian Order*—who is, at the moment, very gravely ill.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

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